

Drone Industry Action Group

Notes of the 6th meeting, 26 September 2017, Church House Conference Centre

Attendees:

Iain Gray, Cranfield University (Chair)	Sue Wolfe, ARPAS-UK
Simon Ritterband, Moonrock Insurance	Nikos Pronios, Innovate UK
Phil Binks, NATS	
Phil Williams, KTN	Officials from BEIS, DFT and CAA
Paul Rigby, ConsortiQ	
Owen McAree, Liverpool JMU	

Apologies:

Tris Dyson & John Laughlin, NESTA	Malcolm Connelly, CyberHawk
Wendy Welsh, Network Rail	Richard Parker, Altitude Angel
Joel Grundy & Neil Watson, Thales	Chris Blackford, Sky Futures
John Stafford Mills, SUAS	
Stuart McGlynn, Cyberhawk	

Observers:

Matt Lee, ARPAS-UK	Aleks Kowalski, ConsortiQ
Peter Grinstead, Atkins	Mark Roberts, Atkins
Olaf Cramme, DJI	Christian Struwe, DJI
Graham Wise, QinetiQ	Jeremy Howitt, QinetiQ
Simon Merriman, BSI	DIT

1. Minutes of 24 July Meeting

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

2. Actions Arising

Update from the Standards Group.

Matt Lee summarised the activity of this group:

- BSI Standard and NQE Guidelines on Pilot Competences: Matt Lee has gained agreement from UK NQEs in proceeding to draft some voluntary standard guidelines on pilot competences. Matt will be leading the first meeting of the NQEs on 28th September. Of the 23 or so NQEs, we are expecting around 6-8 will participate in the drafting exercise, which is a practically sized group and a good representation of NQEs (around 25%). [Note: It was subsequently reported that 11 NQEs attended].
- A BSI group, chaired by Robert Garbett from SUAS Global, is progressing drone standards in the UK. They are at a relatively early stage in scoping what the standard will look like and what subject matter it will cover, but have decided to press ahead with formal operator competences standards as a first step. We would expect the work of the NQE group would be a stepping stone to, and feed into that standard, especially as Matt Lee also sits on the BSI group. Matt and Sue Wolfe, acting on behalf of the IAG, have a provisional meeting arranged with SUAS Global and BSI to discuss how this process might work in practice.
- It is anticipated that the output of the NQE group will have at least 2 clear benefits which will add value to the BSI standard:
 - Acceptance of the standard: It will provide a “hands-on” approach by the peer group of those delivering competence training and assessment, approved by CAA. On this basis, it will be pragmatic and is highly likely to gain acceptance from the vast majority of the NQEs.

- Culture change: Although the structure of the drone industry in the UK is changing, the current industry is still ~ 95% comprised of microSMEs, many of whom are not accustomed to operating within formalised standards. We see that an initial voluntary set of guidelines will encourage those companies to use what is effectively a standards approach, and introduce them to the more rigorous methodology of a formal standard such as BSI, which they might otherwise not adopt.
- Other Industry Sector Standards: At the last meeting, industry sector standards which have been developed by the rail, oil & gas sectors and TfL were discussed, and how strong operator competences could help form a robust baseline to support those standards. Since the last meeting, we have learned more about another sector standard being developed in the construction, energy distribution and offshore industry, co-ordinated by the ECITB. This is very encouraging, and shows that industry sector standards are now progressing more strongly. The IAG Standards Group is in the process of discussing with the ECITB team how we can best co-ordinate. The offshore renewables sector has reached out, but agriculture is proving difficult to engage with.
- CAA would like to work more actively with the standards sub group. **Action:** Matt Lee to copy CAA in to future papers etc.
- Whilst many of the organisations on the national committee are IAG members, BSI said that they would welcome additional representation. **Action:** BSI to be invited to future meetings of the IAG standards sub group.
- It was commented that the forthcoming EASA standards will come into force before Brexit and hence we need to work alongside EASA to avoid the possibility of creating additional and/or unnecessary 'red tape'.
- **Action:** At the next meeting the Standards sub group to give a substantive presentation on its activities and the outcomes from its work.
- **Update on the website.** The KTN have been considering how to improve communication, notably around developing a web site. They have made a proposal to BEIS to establish a web presence and this is being taken forward. The IAG agreed that a web site should be developed as a store of information but that developing an active profile on social media would probably not represent a cost effective approach to addressing the core IAG audience. It was commented that setting up a web site is relatively straightforward; it is developing content that takes time. It was agreed that the minimum requirement is that the web site says something about the IAG, ToRs, participants (perhaps with a page on each member and why they are on the IAG), meeting minutes and an area for case studies/ good news stories. The web site should also allow contact with the IAG. **Action:** KTN (Phil Williams) to work with the Secretariat to develop a proposal for a web site and template for members to complete. **Action:** Anyone interested in helping develop a communications strategy for the IAG to contact Phil Williams.
- **Good news stories.** Iain Gray emphasised the importance of good news stories in building the profile of the sector. One such good news story is that Sky Futures have successfully attracted investment. The meeting passed its congratulations to those involved. Sue Wolfe reported that one of her members had been contracted to undertake inspections at an airport and Owen McAree commented that LMJU was developing some potential good stories around its training activities.

3. Government/Agency updates

DFT. Elena Lynch highlighted the forthcoming Pathfinder Programme event. The pathfinder projects have the common goal of enabling BVLOS and DFT believe that now that the projects have been running for a while that it is timely to bring them together to encourage knowledge pooling and help establish a clearer view as to the remaining challenges, and how they might be addressed. There has been a lot of interest in the event from outside those already working on the pathfinders and DFT are looking at how best to engage the programme with this wider community. The response to the

consultation has been published and there is focus on what is required by way of legislation. The parliamentary calendar is busy, but it may be possible to table something as amendments to the Air Navigation Orders.

BEIS. BEIS officials mentioned the work being done around the AI review and a potential RAS sector deal. BEIS has an ongoing interest in how drones are regulated. BEIS were exploring the possibility of getting the KTN to provide the secretariat function going forward. Government would like to be made aware of, and potentially contribute to, good news stories.

Innovate UK. Nikos Pronios said that 5 of the 7 projects he mentioned at the last meeting were now underway and added that he preferred to wait and circulate details of the projects when all of them have started. In answer to a question Nikos commented that it was highly unlikely that there would be a dedicated drone call in the near future, but there was considerable scope for drones to embed within broader calls. **Action:** Nikos to circulate public descriptions of relevant projects when they have all formally started [held over from previous meeting].

4. A Drone Vision and Strategy Straw Man

Iain Gray commented that there was agreement between himself and Chris Blackford that BVLOS and UTM were key areas that need to be focused on. He went on to say that due to Chris needing to focus on (successfully) raising funds that their work had not progressed as far as they had wished, but that they felt that they should be in a position to work on this over the next few weeks. Phil Binks offered to join Iain and Chris as they develop the straw man. Peter Grinsted also offered his support.

In agreeing to delay the discussion to the next meeting, and in the light of Item 5, it was commented that the process of building an IAG that was suitably balanced and focused should become clearer once a vision for drones in the UK has been developed.

Action: Iain Gray, Chris Blackford and Phil Binks will develop a straw man vision by the end of October 2017. This will be circulated amongst the IAG members and an updated version based on comments received tabled at the next meeting.

5. Potential New IAG Members

Iain Gray opened this part of the meeting by saying that the IAG needs to evolve in order to keep the membership current and focused. To date we have not had a robust/formal system to add members. Given that there has been significant interest from external parties in joining the IAG it has been decided that we should pilot an approach where potential members are invited to observe and IAG meeting and then deliver a short presentation around what they, and the organisations they represent, could contribute to delivering the objectives of the IAG. This approach is being trialled in this meeting in order to allow potential members to see how the IAG operates and ensure that all there is shared ground between all parties.

Atkins, DJI and QinetiQ agreed to pilot this approach and gave short presentations.

- **Atkins.** Peter Grinsted introduced Atkins and their interest in UAS using the attached slide deck. Ensuing questions included:
 - *How does Atkins convert the vision outlined into business?* In answering this Peter said that Atkins are seeking commercial opportunities that will generate revenue for the business. Within this they are seeking to focus on providing support to Government as it develops standards etc.
 - *Are emerging EASA regulations going to sit comfortably alongside the vision outlined?* Peter replied that in so far as the approach outlined is effectively a system-of-systems then conformance with EASA and other regulations is implicit.

- **DJI.** Christian Struwe (Head of European Policy for DJI) introduced DJI and their UK presence. In doing this he positioned DJI as a privately held company whose primary European footprint is in Germany and the Netherlands, but with a substantial sales in the UK (the UK is one of DJI's three biggest European markets). They are members of ARPAS and actively engaged with EASA and wider regulatory development across Europe. Arising questions included:
 - *How do manufacturers currently share information on registration (and ensure cyber security is maintained)?* Christian replied that as a member of the Drone Manufacturers Alliance (DMA) DJI collaborate with Parrot, GoPro and 3DR. DMA is not a legal entity, but allows its members to explore how to ensure that new ideas are taken up without compromising trust.
 - *The presentation mentioned work with fire and police services, what form does this take?* The response was that DJI sells equipment to a number of such organisations and then supports their deployment.
- **QinetiQ.** Jeremy Howitt introduced QinetiQ and their drone interests with a focus on BVLOS testing requirements. In the ensuing discussion the following points were made:
 - The recent consultation indicated that there is a need for a range of test conditions and by inference sites – with an expressed preference that these should be easily accessible (i.e. relatively local). Jeremy commented that QinetiQ have a vision of an “end-to-end, system of systems” style UK capability of which they will be part.
 - In response to a question on tariff structures Jeremy commented that QinetiQ “have moved to a more flexible charging regime”.

Action: Results of the closed discussion be fed back to the applicants, and no further applications for membership progressed until the vision and strategy is agreed at the next IAG meeting.

6. AOB

Simon Merriman asked that anyone who is interested in helping develop a national standard for the ‘Qualification and Approval of UAS Operatives’ contact him at BSI. **Action:** Interested parties to contact Simon directly at Simon.Merriman@bsigroup.com

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Drone Industry Action Group is scheduled for 5 December.